



"Tom Clements"
<clements@nci.org>

01/29/02 03:04 PM
Please respond to
clements

To: jgreis@fs.fed.us, dwear@fs.fed.us
cc:
Subject: SFRA comments

January 29, 2002

RE: Comments on Southern Forest Resource Assessment

Dear Mr. Greis and Mr. Wear,

Thank you for providing the public with an opportunity to comment on the draft of the Southern Forest Resource Assessment (SFRA). I am writing as a native of Georgia deeply concerned about the state of southern forests. I hold a Masters Degree in Forest Resources (University of Georgia, 1977) and have worked for the U.S. Forest Service both in Washington and at the experiment station in Athens, Georgia. I request that my comments be made part of the record.

I am writing to urge you to acknowledge the threat posed by the continued expansion of industrial forestry in the final version of the report. The SFRA documents that while 30 million acres of forest will be lost to sprawl through 2040, at least 250 million acres of forests will be heavily logged by big timber companies to produce products such as paper. Removals of the South's hardwood forests will exceed growth by 2025.

In addition, approximately one in every four acres of the South's "forest" will be a single-species pine plantation by 2040. The use of chemicals in pine plantations will more than double.

Despite these alarming trends, the primary conclusion drawn in the SFRA is that sprawl poses the single biggest threat to Southern forests - a finding that is grossly misleading. I hope you will rectify this oversight in the final version of the report. No one would argue that the loss of forests to sprawl does not pose a serious threat to forests. But, the impacts of big timber companies are exacerbated, not diminished, by increased urbanization, as remaining natural forests become even more important to sustaining wildlife populations, water quality, scenic beauty, recreation, tourism and value-added, quality wood products businesses.

Additionally, I request that review of the forest management situation by the USFS at the Department of Energy's Savannah River Site in South Carolina be included in all planning documents on Southern forests. This small, but significant "national forest" is often neglected in planning documents. The SRS forest is being managed by the USFS, with much conversion of the forest to pine species. Management of this unique area as mostly hardwood should be considered by the USFS.

Sincerely,

Tom Clements
6703 Gude Avenue
Takoma Park, MD 20912
tomclements@hotmail.com